REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-11 and 14-16 are pending.

Claims 1-2, 4-11 and 14-16 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Van Huben (US Patent No. 5,826,265) and Call (US Patent No. 6,154,738).

According to the foregoing, claims 14-16 are amended to correct their dependency from the 'system' claim 1.

The pending claims remain pending for reconsideration, which is respectfully requested.

Applicants note that Van Huben and Call, relied upon in the previous Office Action of February 4, 2004, were expressly overcome based upon an Examiner interview, including a Primary Examiner, on June 1, 2004 and the Amendment of June 3, 2004. Further, the previous Office Action of February 4, 2004 allowed independent claim 9 over Van Huben and Call.

After the interview, in the previous Amendment of June 3, 2004 the independent claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 were amended to incorporate the patentably distinguishing features of dependent claims 3, 12 and 13. The Office Action of February 4, 2004 had rejected dependent claims 3 and 13 as being anticipated by Van Huben, and dependent claim 12 was rejected as being unpatentable over Van Huben and Call. The Examiner agreed in the interview of June 1, 2004 (see Interview Summary Continuation Sheet) that the independent claims 1, 2, 10 and 11, as amended to incorporate the features of dependent claims 3, 12 and 13, to be patentable over Van Huben and Call.

Now, in the present outstanding Office Action, the independent claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 are again rejected based upon Van Huben and Call, and the grounds of rejection are generally same as the previous Office Action of February 4, 2004 except for reliance on new disclosure portions in Van Huben and Call. However, the newly relied upon disclosure portions of Van Huben and Call still fail to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, the claimed embodiments, as follows:

For example, for the claim language "wherein said hardware and firmware related electronic information components as a variety of electronic information generated during the processes including the design, development, manufacture, and inspection of the product constitute a hierarchical structure ...," the Office Action appears to newly rely upon Van Huben column 21, lines 3-10, which only discusses "[Bill of Materials]BOMs are hierarchical in nature and a BOM can be nested within a larger BOM. ..." Van Huben column 6, lines 37-55 and

column 21, lines 3-10 discuss a BOM is a listing of files in a data management system and BOMs can be hierarchical, however, BOMs differ from the claimed "***electronic information generated during the processes including the design, development, manufacture, and inspection of the product constitute a hierarchical structure*** ...," because BOMs fail to represent any hierarchical nature of the files listed in the BOM (see Van Huben column 6, lines 44-50). Further, the language of the claims does not only recite a hierarchical structure of generated electronic information, but the claims recite "***a hierarchical structure*** ... ***according to a numbering system common to both hardware and firmware electronic information components and added to each hardware and firmware electronic information component***." Further, regarding the claim language "***according to a numbering system common to both hardware and firmware electronic information components and added to each hardware and firmware electronic information component***," the Office Action relies upon the same grounds of rejection for rejecting dependent claim 13 in the previous Office Action of February 4, 2004, which has been previously traversed. The Office Action relies upon Van Huben columns 26 and 28, lines 34-41 and 15-26, which discuss tracking the design by part numbers and design fix number, but fails to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, "***a numbering system common to both hardware and firmware electronic information components***."

Further, the Office Action appears to newly rely upon Van Huben column 13, lines 30-42 for allegedly discussing "meta information," and on Call column 25, lines 25-34 for allegedly discussing the claimed "meta-information according to Extensible Markup Language (XML)." Further, the Office Action relies on the same grounds of rejection as in the previous Office Action of February 4, 2004 by relying on Van Huben column 18, lines 9-16 for allegedly discussing the claimed "wherein said ***hardware and firmware related electronic information components*** constituting said product ***are at a same management level***." However, Van Huben only discusses control information as meta data for components of the design and that there is an Engineering Level and a Release Level (column 16, lines 20-23) rather than same management levels, and Call only discusses "meta data capabilities of XML," but fail to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, the claimed embodiment "***a hierarchical structure*** ... ***according to a numbering system common to both hardware and firmware electronic information components*** ... wherein said storage unit stores ***meta-information according to Extensible Markup Language (XML) data expressing the hierarchical structure*** of the hardware and firmware related electronic information components" and "wherein said ***hardware and firmware***

related electronic information components constituting said product ***are at a same management level***."

In other words, Van Huben, including the newly relied upon portion of column 13, lines 30-42, for allegedly discussing the claimed meta information and Call's discussion of meta data capabilities of XML, fail to provide any evidence expressly or implicitly to one skilled in the art to combine Call's XML discussion with Van Huben's Bill of Material (BOM) and control information for components of the design discussion, and then modify both Van Huben and Call to provide the claimed "***a numbering system common to both hardware and firmware electronic information components***" and to use XML based meta-information ("***meta-information according to ... XML***") for expressing "***a hierarchical structure*** ... ***according to a numbering system common to both hardware and firmware electronic information components***" and "***hardware and firmware related electronic information components*** ... ***are at a same management level***," and seen one benefit as provided in page 82, line 16 to page 84, line 13 of the specification, that the hardware and firmware related electronic information can be managed in a unified manner using a numbering system common to both hardware and firmware electronic information and at a same management level, and using XML based meta-information expressing the hierarchical structure of the electronic information according to the number system common to both hardware and firmware electronic information. Thus, for example, improving management efficiency in versioning, error tracking and/or correction, etc., even though such components typically belong to/are treated by systems as different development segments. See, pages 82-87 of the Application. For example, the present application FIGS. 2 and 4 and descriptions thereof support the claimed embodiments.

In view of the remarks, withdrawal of the rejection of pending claims and allowance of pending claims is respectfully requested.

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Respectfully submitted,
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